

**Notice of Allowability**

Application No.

10/802,177

Examiner

Ajay Vasudeva

Applicant(s)

MEHNERT, TIMOTHY W.

Art Unit

3617

**-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--**

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to the interview conducted on 9/06/2006.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 2-7 and 9-19.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some\* c) ☐ None of the:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* Certified copies not received: \_\_\_\_\_.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

**THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.**

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☒ CORRECTED DRAWINGS ( as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
- (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review ( PTO-948) attached
- 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- (b) ☒ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

**Attachment(s)**

- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
- ☐ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Ms. Una Lauricia on 9/06/2006 and with Mr. Ron Kachmarik (Reg # 34512) on 9/12/2006.

2. The application has been amended as follows:

(A) **In the SPECIFICATION**

In the amended Specification submitted 5/02/2006, the paragraph [015] has been amended again as follows:

Referring initially to Figure 1, a rudder position indicator apparatus 10 is illustrated in accordance with an aspect of the present invention. The rudder position indicator apparatus 10 includes a cam 12 coupled to a steering linkage bar 14 of a watercraft 5 ~~(Figure 8)~~. The steering linkage bar 14 is connected to at least one rudder 7 ~~(Figure 8)~~ or outdrive unit (not shown) of the watercraft ~~[[5]]~~. ~~As illustrated in Figure 8, the rudder 7~~ The rudder is a conventional rudder as known to those skilled in the art of watercrafts, and comprises a ~~non-motorized inboard~~ vertical blade that is pivotable about a vertical axis thereof to facilitate steering of the watercraft. The steering linkage bar 14 is controlled by mechanical components such as cables and/or hydraulic actuators which transmit steering commands from a steering wheel or helm to move the steering linkage bar 14 left

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or right along its longitudinal axis, ~~or in other words, via a translational movement,~~ thereby moving the rudder(s) left or right.

In the ABSTRACT

- On line 2, after "coupled to a rudder", -- **or an outdrive** -- has been inserted.
- On line 3, after "When the rudder", -- **or an outdrive** -- has been inserted.

(B) **In the CLAIMS**

**Claim 1** is canceled.

**In Claims 2-7**

- In claim 2 (line 1), after "apparatus of", "**claim 1**" has been changed to -- **claim 18** --.
- In claim 3 (line 1), after "apparatus of", "**claim 1**" has been changed to -- **claim 18** --.
- In claim 4 (line 1), after "apparatus of", "**claim 1**" has been changed to -- **claim 18** --.
- In claim 5 (line 1), after "apparatus of", "**claim 1**" has been changed to -- **claim 18** --.
- In claim 6 (line 1), after "apparatus of", "**claim 1**" has been changed to -- **claim 18** --.
- In claim 7 (line 1), after "apparatus of", "**claim 1**" has been changed to -- **claim 18** --.

**Claim 8** is canceled

**In Claim 9**

On line 1, after "apparatus of", "**claim 8**" has been changed to -- **claim 19** --.

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**In Claims 10-12**

- In claim 10 (line 1), after "apparatus of", "**claim 1**" has been changed to – **claim 18** --.
- In claim 11 (line 1), after "apparatus of", "**claim 1**" has been changed to – **claim 18** --.
- In claim 12 (line 1), after "apparatus of", "**claim 1**" has been changed to – **claim 18** --.

**In Claims 13 and 14**

- In claim 13 (line 1), after "apparatus of", "**claim 8**" has been changed to – **claim 19** --.
- In claim 14 (line 1), after "apparatus of", "**claim 8**" has been changed to – **claim 19** --.

**In Claim 15**

In claim 15 (line 1), after "apparatus of", "**claim 1**" has been changed to – **claim 18** --.

(C) The following NEW CLAIMS have been added.

-- **Claim 18. A rudder position indicator apparatus comprising:**

**a cam coupled to a steering linkage bar of a watercraft, the steering linkage bar having a longitudinal axis;**

**a rudder mechanism coupled to the steering linkage bar of the watercraft, the rudder mechanism having at least one vertical rudder, wherein the at least one vertical rudder is pivotable about a vertical axis in response to a movement of the steering linkage bar along the longitudinal axis;**

a steering mechanism coupled to the rudder mechanism via the steering linkage bar such that movement of the steering mechanism effects movement of the vertical rudder;

a switch coupled to a fixed portion of the watercraft, wherein the cam activates the switch when the vertical rudder of the watercraft is in a centered position; and

an indicator in electrical communication with the switch to indicate to an operator of the watercraft when the rudder of the watercraft is in the centered position.

**Claim 19. A rudder position indicator apparatus comprising:**

a steering linkage bar of a watercraft, the steering linkage bar having a longitudinal axis;

a cam secured to the steering linkage bar, the cam movable along the longitudinal axis of the steering linkage bar;

a manually operable rudder mechanism having a rudder coupled to the steering linkage bar, wherein the rudder is movable in response to a movement of the steering linkage bar along the longitudinal axis, and wherein the steering linkage bar is controlled via a steering mechanism; and

means for contacting the cam, said means for contacting being activated by the cam when the rudder of the watercraft is moved to a centered position; and

means for indicating, said means for indicating being activated by said means for contacting when the rudder of the watercraft is moved to the centered position. --

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**Drawings**

3. The following changes to the drawings have been approved by the examiner and agreed upon by applicant:

- Figure 8 has been deleted.


Note: Applicant is requested to submit formal drawings to include approved figure 7..

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ajay Vasudeva whose telephone number is (571) 272-6689. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 12:00 -- 5:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, S. Joe Morano can be reached on (571) 272-6684. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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